

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----028868 101630Z /45

O 101510Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9177
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4632

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PBOR MOPS MILI SY LE IS
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON

1. SUMMARY: MET WITH SARKIS AND BOUTROS MORNING AUGUST 10
TO GET THEIR ANSWER ON PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT TO DEBLOCK
KAWKABA IMPASSE. ESSENCE OF THEIR POSITION WAS THAT THERE
NO POSSIBILITY WORKING OUT AGREEMENT POLITICALLY OR
DIPLOMATICALLY WITH ISRAEL AND IT WILL HAVE TO BE SETTLED
INTERNALLY WITHIN LEBANON. THEY VERY DUBIOUS ABOUT
ISRAELI ATTITUDE ON GROUND AND NOT PREPARED PUT ANY
FAITH IN ASSURANCES FROM WEIZMAN BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT
HONORED BY BENGAL AND EYTAN. THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY
WILL DO, BUT WILL THINK ABOUT IT. I DOUBT THEY WILL
TRY TO MOVE TROOPS TO TIBNIN GIVEN CONVERSATION AT
NAQURAH REPORTS IN STATE 202057, UNLESS WE CAN GIVE
THEM IRONCLAD ASSURANCES WITH BEGIN'S SIGNATURE ON
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THEM. END SUMMARY.

2. CALLED ON SARKIS AT PALACE MORNING AUGUST 10.
BOUTROS ALSO PRESENT. KINSOLVING ACCOMPANIED.
PRESIDENT, WHO SMILING AND RELAXED, PRESUMABLY
BECAUSE OF INITIAL SUCCESS HIS EFFORTS TO DEBLOCK
SITUATION IN BEIRUT, SAID SITUATION HERE CLOSELY

TIED TO THAT IN SOUTH AND SOLUTION OF PROBLEM THERE WOULD GREATLY FACILITATE THINGS UP HERE. HE ASKED WHAT NEWS I COULD TELL HIM.

3. I SAID WEIZMAN HAD ASKED QUANDT YESTERDAY WHEN COMPANY WAS MOVING TO TIBNIN AND HAD SAID ISRAELIS STILL AGREEABLE. I NOTED, HOWEVER, WE UNDERSTOOD THAT BENGAL AND EYTAN HAD TAKEN LESS FAVORABLE ATTITUDE IN YESTERDAY'S MEETING AT NAQURAH AND HAD SAID IN EFFECT THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT FACILITATE PASSAGE OF COLUMN. I PRESUMED THAT IF LEBANESE WERE PREPARED TO REINSTATE HADDAD AND PROMOTE HIM TO COLONEL, AS HE WAS DEMANDING, THEN THE COLUMN COULD PASS. OTHERWISE, I THOUGHT LEBANESE WOULD HAVE TO FACE FACT THAT ISRAELIS WOULD BE UNHELPFUL. BENGAL AND EYTAN WERE OBVIOUSLY NOT INTERESTED IN HAVING LEBANESE COLUMN MOVE SOUTH. NOR WOULD THEY LET HADDAD LEAVE, WHATEVER HIS OWN DESIRES MIGHT BE, BECAUSE HIS PRESENCE WAS ESSENTIAL TO THEIR POSITION IN SOUTH LEBANON. LEBANESE WOULD HAVE TO RECONCILE THEMSELVES TO FACT HADDAD WAS THERE TO STAY FOR TIME BEING, AND WOULD ENJOY ISRAELI SUPPORT. DECISION ON WHETHER AND HOW THEY MOVED TROOPS TO TIBNIN WAS FOR THEM TO MAKE. USG STILL THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE TROOPS THERE, BUT WE MUST ACCEPT FACT WE WERE PROBABLY UNABLE MOVE ISRAELIS ANY FURTHER ON ISSUE,
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ALTHOUGH WE WOULD KEEP TRYING.

4. BOUTROS ASKED WHETHER ISRAELIS AND HADDAD COULD PREVENT USE OF HELICOPTERS. I SAID THIS WAS MILITARY QUESTION INVOLVING RANGES OF WEAPONS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WHICH I UNABLE ANSWER. IT WAS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT LEBANESE COULD NOT LIFT MEN FROM KAWKABA WITHOUT THEIR BEING EXPOSED TO FIRE FROM MARJAYUN. DISTANCE WAS PERHAPS FOUR KILOMETERS. MEN WOULD HAVE TO BE PICKED UP FROM POINT FURTHER NORTH IF HELICOPTERS WERE USED, AND ROUTE WHICH DID NOT PASS BY MARJAYUN WOULD HAVE TO BE SELECTED. I PRESUMED THIS WAS TECHNICALLY POSSIBLE, BUT DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THE POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS.

5. BOUTROS ASKED IF UNIT WOULD NOT BE EXPOSED TO FIRE FROM MILITIAS ONCE IT GOT TO TIBNIN. WE WENT OVER TO MAP AND AGREED THAT AT LEAST IT WOULD BE BETTER PROTECTED THAN AT KAWKABA. I NOTED THAT WE HAD PREVAILED ON ISRAELIS TO RESTRAIN HADDAD THE OTHER NIGHT, AND WOULD DO SO AGAIN IF NECESSARY, THAT IN TIBNIN UNIT WOULD BE SURROUNDED BY UNIFIL AND THAT WOULD HAVE

SOBERING EFFECT, AND THAT SITUATION IN GENERAL WOULD
BE MORE FAVORABLE THAN IT WAS AT KAWKABA.

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EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

6. BOUTROS THEN RAISED QUESTION OF HADDAD'S FUTURE AS
TOUCHED ON IN SECRETARY'S LETTER. I SAID THAT
ALTHOUGH LANGUAGE SPOKE OF MUTUAL AGREEMENT ON HIS
FUTURE, I DID NOT THINK ANYONE HAD ANY ILLUSIONS THAT
LEBANESE AND ISRAELIS WOULD IMMEDIATELY SIT DOWN AND
WORK OUT AGREEMENT AS SOON AS TROOPS IN TIBNIN.
LEBANESE COULD PROBABLY LEAVE ISSUE IN ICE BOX IN-
DEFINITELY. BOUTROS SAID THAT MIGHT BE THE CASE AS
FAR AS ISRAELIS CONCERNED, BUT HE HAD AN INTERNAL
DEADLINE. THEY COULD NOT WAIT MUCH LONGER, AND WHEN
THEY PROCEEDED TO COURTMARTIAL HADDAD AND CONDEMN HIM
TO DEATH FOR FIRING ON LEBANESE TROOPS, WHAT WOULD
HADDAD AND THE ISRAELIS DO THEN? THEY WOULD SHOOT
AT TIBNIN WITH EVERYTHING THEY HAD, AND LEBANESE
SITUATION WOULD BECOME UNTENABLE. HE DID NOT
THINK THE LEBANESE WOULD RISK THAT.

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7. SARKIS SAID IT WAS CLEAR THERE WAS NO POLITICAL OR DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION TO PROBLEM. IT COULD ONLY BE SOLVED INTERNALLY, WITHOUT CONFRONTATION WITH OR REFERENCE TO ISRAEL. BOUTROS NOTED THAT WITH EVERY DAY THAT PASSED, ISRAELI POSITION BECAME HARDER. FROM INITIAL PROPOSITION PUT BY WEIZMAN TO POSITION TAKEN BY EYTAN YESTERDAY, THEY HAD STEADILY INCREASED STRIDENCY OF THEIR DEMANDS AGAINST LEBANON. IT WAS FURTHERMORE CLEAR THAT, WHATEVER WEIZMAN MIGHT SAY, IT WAS MILITARY ON THE GROUND, PRESUMABLY SUPPORTED BY BEGIN, WHO CALLED THE SHOTS. I SAID ISRAELI POSITION HAD NOT REALLY CHANGED ALL THAT MUCH. ACCORDING TO UNIFIL, EYTAN HAD BEEN AGSINST DEPLOYMENT AT TIBNIN FROM VERY BEGINNING. WHAT HAD CHANGED WAS OUR PERCEPTION OF REALITIES.

8. BOUTROS THEN ASKED WHAT OUR POSITION WOULD BE ON CALL FOR SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING. I SAID USG POSITION WAS THAT LITTLE COULD BE EXPECTED TO EMERGE FROM MEETING. WHILE LEBANESE HAD GOOD CASE AGAINST ISRAELIS, LATTER WOULD HIDE BEHIND HADDAD AND SAY THEY WERE NOT INVOLVED AND THAT THIS WAS INTERNAL LEBANESE MATTER. BEGIN HAD SAID THAT AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED THREAT OF SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING WAS NOT INTIMIDATING; ISRAEL HAD NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF IN ITS SUPPORT FOR CHRISTIANS.

9. I DWELT AT LENGTH ON ISRAELI MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SITUATION IN LEBANON AND NATURE OF LEBANESE COLUMN. ISRAELIS APPEARED BELIEVE SINCERELY THAT SYRIANS PLANNED MASSACRE CHRISTIANS. I SAID OUR AMBASSADOR HAD TRIED TO REASON WITH BEGIN IN THIS RESPECT, BUT LATTER ALWAYS RESPONDED WITH A THANK
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YOU AND SAID HE HAD HIS OWN INFORMATION WHICH WAS BETTER THAN OURS. BOUTROS COMMENTED THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH A DIPLOMATIC AGREEMENT WITH BEGIN IN ANY FIELD.

10. COMMENT: UNLESS WE CAN COME FORWARD WITH SOME IRONCLAD GUARANTEES, BINDING BENGAL AND EYTAN AS WELL AS WEIZMAN, I DOUBT VERY MUCH THAT LEBANESE WILL SEND TROOPS TO TINBNIN OR ANYWHERE ELSE IN SOUTH. AFTER WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO DATE, I CANNOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE ASK THEM TO DO SO. WE AND UN HAVE SUFFERED CONSIDERABLE SETBACK LOCALLY. BOUTROS

COMMENTED AT BEGINNING OF MEETING, "YOU ARE WITH US
IN SENTIMENT BUT UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO EXERCISE
EFFECTIVE PRESSURE ON ISRAEL."

11. I EXPECT SARKIS WILL WORK OUT SOME SORT OF
ARRANGEMENT UNDER WHICH LEBANESE FORCE WILL BE WITH-
DRAWN. IF THIS MEANS COLLAPSE OF UNIFIL, NOT TOO
MANY TEARS WILL BE SHED LOCALLY. IT WILL MEAN TO
GOL SIMPLY THAT INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS UNABLE
OR UNWILLING TO ACCEPT BURDEN OF RESTORING LEBANESE
SOVEREIGNTY, AND LEBANESE ARE INCAPABLE OF DOING
SO THEMSELVES AS LONG AS WE CANNOT BRING ISRAEL
AROUND. THIS MAY HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES
INTERNATIONALLY, BUT HERE IT IS JUST ONE MORE
BUCKET OF WATER TO A DROWNING MAN.
PARKER

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